

**In Appreciation of Buffoonery,  
Egotism, and the Shōmon School:  
Koikawa Harumachi's  
*Kachō kakurenbō* (1776)**

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Buffoonery and egotism were two aspects of mainstream *haikai* practice that Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694) and his Shōmon school sought to eradicate. For imbuing *haikai* with the technical and aesthetic refinement of a serious literary form, he and his constituents, particularly his “ten great disciples” (*Shōmon no jittetsu*), emerged as *haikai* royalty whose companionship and instruction were coveted by eager patrons. Following the master’s death, and for much of the eighteenth century, some school affiliates struggled to defend Shōmon *haikai*’s studied elegance against the vulgar commercialism that so often accompanied celebrity.<sup>1</sup> For others, celebrity was an end in itself, a *modus operandi* that invited popular appreciation. Such is the perspective advanced by Koikawa Harumachi’s (1744-1789) parodic work *Kachō kakurenbō* (Hide and seek among flowers and birds, 1776).<sup>2</sup> In form, *Kachō kakurenbō* is a biography of the Shōmon poet Yamazaki Hokka (1700-1746); in fact, it is an ode to selfishness that satirizes Hokka and his Shōmon counterparts. Advancing the view that the school had become frivolous and self-important, *Kachō* mocks the school’s proprietary claim to lofty poetic criteria—*fūkyō* (poetic madness) and *muyō* (uselessness), for example—advanced by Bashō as hallmarks of superior verse. Though

<sup>1</sup> A full treatment of the Shōmon school’s various factions is beyond the scope of these prefatory remarks. For a comprehensive discussion of the Shōmon school, as well as the commercial aspects of *tentori* (point garnering) *haikai*, see Cheryl A. Crowley, *Haikai Poet Yosa Buson and the Bashō Revival* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> The work was published by Urokogataya Magobei, who had printed Harumachi’s first *kibyōshi*, *Kinkin sensei eiga no yume* (Master Flashgold’s Splendiferous Dream), the previous year.

not intended as a serious literary work, *Kachō* offers a perspective that complicates our view of the school’s public image. First, it advances a view of Shōmon affiliates as arrogant elites whose profligacy lowered rather than elevated *haikai* practice. Having lost its cultural prestige, it suggests, the school is rightfully appreciated as a source of laughter. Second, it appeals to an existing taste for buffoonery by both lampooning and rejoicing together with a local readership hungry for glimpses of Edo’s pleasure quarters, kabuki actors, and *haikai* poets.

The commentary below introduces the bizarre figure of Yamazaki Hokka and discusses him within the context of the Shōmon school’s poetics of eccentricity: *fūkyō* (or *kyō*) and *muyō*. It then describes the process by which later Shōmon affiliates replaced Bashō’s poetics of eccentricity with buffoonery and egotistical identities like Hokka’s. The commentary is followed by a translation of the work.

### Master Depravity

A *gesaku* writer, *kyōka* poet, and ukiyoe artist, Koikawa Harumachi acquired particular recognition around Edo in 1775 for his *Kinkin sensei eiga no yume* (Master Flashgold’s Splendiferous Dream), the prototype for a genre of comic works to be called *kibyōshi*.<sup>3</sup> Illustrated booklets with

<sup>3</sup> Harumachi was born to a retainer of the Matsudaira house in Shizuoka and adopted by Kurahashi Katsumasa, also a high-ranking Matsudaira samurai. He moved to Edo and lived in the Edo suburb of Koishikawa Kasugachō (小石川春日町) from which he devised the name Koikawa Harumachi (恋川春町). In 1789 his *Ōmugaeshi bunbu no futamichi* (Parroting the two paths: literary and military) was censored for satirizing the samurai class and the Kansei Reforms (1789-93). He died soon thereafter. (Note: In principle this article will not include *kanji* for names and titles. Here, and in other select instances, the author opts to provide *kanji* for clarification.)

*Kibyōshi* were popular in the 1770s and 1780s but, due largely to censorship imposed during the Kansei Reforms, declined by the first decade of

yellow covers, these publications capitalized on popular fascination with current events and fashion trends, delivering satire and humor to adult readers through colloquial language written in *hiragana*. For the last quarter of the eighteenth century, *kibyōshi* fed growing appetites for popular culture among middle-class townsmen, who, in contrast to the more elite patrons of Genroku era (1688-1704) popular culture, leaned more toward the vulgar/modern (*zoku*) and took particular glee in spoofing the arrogance of the refined/traditional (*ga*).<sup>4</sup> Harumachi capitalized on this new market for comic fiction by producing several dozen *kibyōshi* between 1775 and 1789.

In part, this new market crystallized in response to a perceived decline in the shogun's political authority. Tokugawa Ieharu (1737-1786) was a tragic-comic figure popularly viewed, according to one Dutch observer, as "a lazy, lustful, stupid man."<sup>5</sup> Described by Timon Screech as one who slept late, ate much, and accomplished little, Ieharu was a laughing stock throughout his rule. The reign began in 1760 with the worst of portents—a major fire that destroyed much of Edo, and would later witness natural disasters, famines, and a culture of excess that weakened the bakufu and incited civil unrest. At this time, Shogunal chief councilor Matsudaira Sadanobu (1759-1829) reported widespread public convictions that the bakufu had succumbed to corruption, lost the ability to rule, and was close to collapse.<sup>6</sup> This political weakening corresponded to a popularization of plebian cultural forms that took pleasure in satirizing elites.

The new market also found comic potential in

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the nineteenth century. For a synopsis of *Master Flashgold* and a comprehensive discussion of *kibyōshi*, see Adam L. Kern, *Manga of the Floating World: Comicbook Culture and the Kibyōshi of Edo Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> Peipei Qiu, "Celebrating Kyō: The Eccentricity of Bashō and Nanpo," *Early Modern Japan* 16 (2008): 90.

<sup>5</sup> Timon Screech, *The Shogun's Painted Culture: Fear and Creativity in the Japanese States 1760-1829* (London: Reaktion, 2000), p. 93.

<sup>6</sup> Screech 2000, pp. 93, 95, 97.

the now-antiquated airs of Shōmon poets who proudly clung to the master's prestige. Perhaps sensing that this sort of idolatry would be condemned by Bashō, who had cautioned that poets must never be content to "licking the dribbling" of past masters, Harumachi did not hesitate to exploit this irony.<sup>7</sup> He could hope for no better subject to embody this phenomenon than Yamazaki Hokka, who, as an eccentric legend in his own right, bore exquisite comic potential.

A samurai retainer temperamentally ill-suited to official service, Hokka retired at age thirty-eight and proceeded to reinvent himself as both an independent literatus (*bunjin*) and a comic spectacle. He published a number of essays, most notably *Fūzoku bunshū: mukashi no hanko* (A miscellany of manners: scraps from antiquity, 1744), *Chō no asobi* (Frolic of the butterfly, 1746), and *Rōshikyō* (Laboring over four follies, 1747), each of which earned praise as important examples of mid-eighteenth century comic writing. But he was also an inveterate buffoon and wastrel, and this composite identity brought him celebrity in Edo for the next century. Better known by his penname Jidaraku sensei (Master Depravity), Hokka's writings earn laudatory appraisals by the later writers Utei Enba (1743-1822), Kikira Kinkei (1767-1809), and Takizawa Bakin (1767-1848). The *bunjin* Ryūtei Rijō (d. 1841) noted that as a comic writer Hokka was an important forebear of the illustrious Hiraga Gen'ai (1728-1779).<sup>8</sup>

Admiration for Hokka rested upon a reputation built as much on legend as literary accomplishment, however. Hokka wasted no opportunity to capitalize on Edo's appetite for spectacle or to advance himself as a cultured playboy. His writings, appropriately, focus on himself. In his autobiographical collection of essays *Fūzoku bunshū*, Hokka devotes considerable space to fashioning himself as a Zhuangzi-like *muyōsha* (useless person), free of ambition and socially irrelevant.<sup>9</sup> On the love of sleeping that Haru-

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<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Ebara Taizō, *Haikaishi no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hoshino Shoten, 1949), p. 232.

<sup>8</sup> Nakano Mitsutoshi, *Kinsei shin-kijinden* (Iwanami Shoten, 2004), pp. 8, 45.

<sup>9</sup> *Zhuangzi* famously expounds on the use of the useless in several sections, but particularly in

machi would later mock in *Kachō*, Hokka proudly affirms:

Since retiring I have made sleep my profession. I doze with the moon, snore with the blossoms, share a pillow with the cuckoos, and pile up the quilts on snowy days.<sup>10</sup> When morning arrives I do not wake, and when I do arise it is only until I finish breakfast. When I tire of dozing, when my head becomes heavy and my bones ache, I rise to enjoy a smoke and then recline all over again.... At twilight I take up my saké cup, get drunk, and collapse face down. I slumber evening, noon, and morning.<sup>11</sup>

Hokka also intentionally called himself and his dwellings by perversely humorous names that would invite comment. His house (*ken*) was called Fūryōken 不量軒 (a homonym for Evil Dwelling); his hermitage (*an*) was Mushian 無思庵 (a homonym for Thoughtless Hut and Bug-infested Hut); his meditation room (*sai*) was Sharakusai 捨樂斎 (a homonym for Impudent Room); and his Buddhist name (*bō*) was Kaku-renbō 確蓮坊 (Hide-and-Seek, or one who hides away).

Besides names, Hokka exploited a second definitive identity marker: physical appearance. In his travel journal *Chō no asobi*, Hokka confesses to perfuming his clothing, growing a long beard, wearing his hair in a bun, and dying his teeth, all noteworthy markers of strangeness. But he is also quick to deny ulterior motives for his eccentric appearance: “I haven’t shaved my forehead because I have trouble using a razor. I let my

beard grow for the fun of it. I have dyed my teeth black because they are decayed.”<sup>12</sup> Such statements clearly suggest that Hokka took pains to assume the appearance of a Chinese literatus, however. His self-portrait shows him with a long beard, hair balled in the back, and dressed in garb reminiscent of iconic Chinese scholars and recluses so admired by Japanese *bunjin*. To most observers Hokka’s manifestations of Sino-philic eccentricity would be unmistakable, but in case anyone had missed them Hokka purposefully draws attention to his madness in *Fūzoku bunshū*: “Some people ask me why my usual manner of speaking and acting is so different from the norm. Others tell me that I am mad. To them I reply: ‘Yes, I truly *am* mad.’ Then, when they who called me mad agree with me on that point, I grab a pillow and lie down.”<sup>13</sup> His actual appearance cannot be verified, which was immaterial for later readers. For Harumachi, certainly, Hokka’s odd appearance was central to his comic appeal, and in *Kachō* Harumachi faithfully reproduces those features, noting that Hokka “was just like the Chinese scholars Cheng Hao and Guan Yu.”<sup>14</sup>

*Chō no asobi* is also called *Zoku-oku no hosomichi* (Sequel to the Narrow Road to the Deep North) because it is a record of Hokka’s two-month trip to Nikkō, Matsushima, and other points along Bashō’s 1689 pilgrimage through the northern provinces. The travelogue copies Bashō’s work in form and tone, yet Hokka takes glee in revealing a degenerate underside to his journey. In addition to numerous references to alcohol and tobacco, he recounts being awakened one night by a villager who had entered the inn and was attempting to violate the innkeeper, a young widow. The journal culminates by recounting that Hokka, having reached Matsushima, fell asleep and dreamed that he encountered and

Section 4: “In the World of Men.” We know that Hokka held Zhuangzi in high esteem, for the title of his travelogue *Chō no asobi* (Frolic of the butterfly) invokes Zhuangzi’s famous butterfly dream.

<sup>10</sup> The moon, blossoms, cuckoo, and snow symbolize the four seasons: fall, spring, summer, and winter respectively. These images are also classical signifiers for poetry and beauty in Japan’s literary tradition.

<sup>11</sup> Nakano 2004, pp.28-29.

<sup>12</sup> Translated in Donald Keene, *Travelers of a Hundred Ages* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 353.

<sup>13</sup> Nakano 2004, p. 23.

<sup>14</sup> Cheng Hao (1032-1085) was a Neo-Confucian scholar noted for his moral virtue and piety. Guan Yu (d. 219) was a general famous for his long beard. These comparisons are absurd and therefore humorous.

conversed with an old priest. The priest is revealed to be Bashō, who then confirms that Hokka and his *haikai* exemplify the authentic spirit of the Shōmon school.<sup>15</sup> *Chō no asobi* thus establishes the pilgrimage as a tribute to Bashō and validates Hokka as a Shōmon poet. For Hokka, the dream was sufficient justification to claim himself a *haikai* master.

Hokka's most celebrated antic, and that which established him as an urban legend, was fabricating his own funeral. According Ōta Nanpo (1749-1823), who describes the mock funeral in *Kana sesetsu* (Anonymous rumors, 1825), on New Year's Eve, 1739 Hokka's coffin was paraded through the streets to Yōfuku-ji temple in Yanaka. "Just as the resident priest began to chant the prayer that precedes touching fire to the coffin, Hokka broke open the coffin and jumped out. His friends, who had followed the cortège to the temple, had brought along food and drink. They enjoyed themselves singing and dancing, to the astonishment of everyone."<sup>16</sup> The prominent gravestone erected for this event remains Hokka's only existing tomb and dates his death as 1739. We know of his actual death in 1746 only from records at Hongō Sannenji temple in Ochano-mizu.<sup>17</sup> Given the dearth of verifiable documentary information about Hokka, it is likely that Harumachi and others knew of him only what they read in Hokka's own writings. *Kachō*'s full account of the tombstone and its epitaph, as well as the virtual absence of information about Hokka's actual death, suggests that Harumachi understood the funeral as legitimate. *Kachō* reveals no knowledge of it as fake, and one imagines that Harumachi could hardly have resisted mentioning this outrageous hoax if he had known it as such. Instead, finding no historical explanation for Hokka's sudden demise, Harumachi seizes it as an opportunity for mirth: "With no

shortage of pleasures during each of the four seasons, he seemed destined to enjoy longevity. But then he was suddenly beset with a slight cold and passed away." Harumachi's apparent disinterest in distinguishing between Hokka's accounts and historical fact also explains his mistaken assertion that Hokka had studied with Bashō. After all, such was the ruse that Hokka had manufactured in *Chō no asobi*.<sup>18</sup>

Noting that he had never witnessed such a jocular event as this fake funeral and that he would certainly have wanted to meet the man, Ōta Nanpo seems quite taken with Hokka. But Nanpo also calls Hokka a phony madman (*yōkyō*) for the latter's propensity for self-promotion, averring that his objectives were directed outward for the amusement of others.<sup>19</sup> The funeral, certainly, was contrived and carried out for this purpose. Nakano Mitsutoshi sees hypocrisy in Hokka, as well, positing that Hokka's eccentricities actually followed examples set by his acquaintance and fellow Shōmon poet Kagami Shikō (1665-1731), perhaps the most talented of Bashō's close disciples. In a series of initiatives redolent of Hokka, Shikō deployed Bashō's name to gild his own reputation, and used provocative aliases—Hakkyō 白狂 (White Wildness) and Watanabe no kyō 渡辺ノ狂 (Wacky Watanabe), for example—to embellish his public image. In order to gauge public reaction to his death, Shikō had earlier (1711) fraudulently publicized his own demise and then proceeded to circulate laudatory commentaries on his own writings under his students' names.<sup>20</sup> In addition, the epitaph on Hokka's gravestone—quoted below in *Kachō kakurenbō*—is a *kanashi* (kana poem), a rare poetic form developed by Shikō.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Transparent disregard for historical accuracy, both by Hokka in relating his exploits and by Harumachi in reiterating them, is immaterial. Both authors willingly sacrificed authenticity to achieve the desired comic effects.

<sup>19</sup> Nakano 2004, pp. 7-8.

<sup>20</sup> Ueda Masaaki, et al., *Konsaisu Nihon jinmei jiten*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, (Sanseido, 2009), p. 333.

<sup>21</sup> Andrew Lawrence Markus, *The Willow in Autumn: Ryūtei Tanehiko, 1783-1842* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1992), p. 219. *Kanashi* imitated the five

<sup>15</sup> Keene 1999, pp. 351-53.

<sup>16</sup> Translated in Keene 1999, p. 347.

<sup>17</sup> *Gazoku no kai* (ed.), with Nakano Mitsutoshi, *Gazoku bunsō: Nakano Mitsutoshi sensei koki kinen shiryōshū* (Kyūko Shoin, 2005), p. 162. *Haikai daijiten* (Encyclopedic Dictionary of *Haikai*) also gives Hokka's dates as 1700-1746, but Nakano claims that the year of his death cannot be confirmed.

It appears, then, that Hokka may have recycled several of the strategies used by Shikō to establish his reputation as a Shōmon poet and an eccentric. For Nanpo and Nakano, at least, evidence of close connections between the two poets adequately indicates that Hokka's wildness was a consciously manufactured façade. Yet, for Hokka, buffoonery may also have been a veneer camouflaging a darker, more fatalistic disposition. While young he had endured a series of family deaths—his father at age nine, his mother at nineteen, and his older brother at twenty-three.<sup>22</sup> His subsequent series of failed appointments, early retirement, and degenerate lifestyle reveal a rebellious temperament and a conspicuous distaste for mainstream society. The morbid nature of Hokka's funeral prank, moreover, suggests a preoccupation with death that is later elucidated through his exegesis on life and death in *Rōshikyō*. Here, Hokka intones the suffering of life, which, he avers, consists of hardship and madness alternately generating each other and that are transcended only through death.<sup>23</sup> If selfishness was a symptom of personal misfortunes and social alienation, therefore, buffoonery became the façade by which it took shape. The mock funeral made a mockery of death; it was a confrontation that allowed him to face mortality and emerge reborn.

#### *Kachō kakurenbō* and the Shōmon school

Bashō patterned himself on celebrated hermits from China and Japan—the iconic Zhuangzi (4<sup>th</sup> c. BCE), Tao Qian (365-427), Kamo no Chōmei (1155-1216), and Yoshida Kenkō (1283-1352)—whose eremitism allowed them to remain unfettered by mundane encumbrances. Zhuangzi's notions of uselessness (*muyō*) and madness (*kyō*) were especially important to Bashō, who styled himself a *muyōsha*, “a hermit and socially useless soul who had forgotten the

world.”<sup>24</sup> In the linked verse collection *Fuyu no hi* (Winter days, 1684), Bashō writes:

My bamboo hat had worn out in the rains  
of the long journey, and my paper jacket  
had become crumpled in the storms. A  
poor man utterly destitute, even I felt pity  
for myself. Suddenly I remembered that a  
gifted man of eccentric poetry had visited  
this province in the past, and I uttered:

With a crazy verse  
and the wintry winds—I must look  
much like Chikusai.<sup>25</sup>

Bashō's self-comparison to Chikusai, a fictional character from Tomiyama Dōya's (1585-1634) *Chikusai monogatari* with a crazed love of *kyōka*, confesses his own devotion to *haikai* to be a comparable form of madness.<sup>26</sup> By emulating the reclusive, eccentric lifestyles of iconic archetypes, Bashō both weds *haikai* to tropes of madness and uselessness, and raises it to a technically and aesthetically superior form unsullied by commercialism.

Prior to this, *kyō* had consisted of comic aberration, vulgarity, or wildness that used existing literary genres—comic *tanka* (*kyōka*), comic prose (*kyōbun*), and comic drama (*kyōgen*)—to deliver humor. “In order to transform *haikai* into poetry of profound meaning,” Peipei Qiu asserts, “Bashō and his followers reinvented the *kyō* of *haikai* by creating the personae of unworldly recluse and carefree wanderer. Through this effort, Bashō transformed the nature of *kyō* in *haikai* poetics fundamentally, making it a cornerstone of Shōmon (Bashō School) poetics.”<sup>27</sup> The same can be claimed of *muyō*. Emulating his master's self-described uselessness, Shōmon disciple Hattori Ransetsu (1654-1707) followed Bashō in relinquishing samurai status to become a

and seven character lines of *kanshi* (Chinese poems) but used *kana* and rhyming Japanese words.

<sup>22</sup> Nakano 2004, p. 13.

<sup>23</sup> Nakano 2004, p. 31.

<sup>24</sup> Karaki Junzō, *Muyōsha no keifu* (Chikua Shobō, 1960), p. 69.

<sup>25</sup> Translation is from Peipei Qiu, *Bashō and the Dao: The Zhuangzi and the Transformation of Haikai* (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 2005), p. 74.

<sup>26</sup> Qiu 2005, p. 74.

<sup>27</sup> Qiu 2008, p. 84.

wandering poet, and would later be described as a *muyōsha* in *Haika kijindan* (Accounts of eccentric *haikai* poets, 1816).<sup>28</sup>

Bashō's poetics of eccentricity elevated the tenor of *haikai*, but in the hands of his later disciples it became particularistic, whimsical, and ultimately contradictory to Bashō's vision. Shōmon school affiliation had required no direct interaction with the master. As a nationwide collective of self-designated followers, affiliation signified more of a vague admiration for him than a mastery of his poetics. His closest disciples, perhaps feeling unable to attain the master's level of literary achievement, either concentrated on compiling and transmitting his teachings—and, like Shikō, paying tribute to themselves as his poetic heirs—or took *haikai* in directions more consistent with their personal inclinations. Though many retained Bashō's fondness for travel, his heirs variously interpreted signature aesthetics like *fūkyō* and *muyō* as justification for self-indulgence. Hokka, for example, invokes the same classical archetypes of aestheticism and eremitism—he writes at length in *Rōshikyō*, a parody of Laozi's *Dao de jing* (J.: *Rōshikyō*), of his fondness for reclusion—but in his hands the practice is replaced by silliness, with *fūkyō* and *muyō* eroding into pretense and spectacle.

Bashō's close disciple Hirose Izen (d. 1711) offers a second example.<sup>29</sup> Trading wealth, status, family, and possessions for the simple, unencumbered life of a beggar, Izen wandered directionless throughout the provinces, an erratic existence that brought the master's aesthetics of *fūkyō* closer to a lifestyle of *kyō*. Izen was especially known for what he called his *Fūra nenbutsu* (Bashō-esque Prayer), refrains cobbled together from Bashō's poems:

*mazu tanomu mazu tanomu shii no ki*  
*mo ari natsu kodachi*  
*oto ya arare no hinokigasa*  
*namu amida namu amida.*<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Karaki 1960, p. 72.

<sup>29</sup> Izen (惟然) is also read Inen.

<sup>30</sup> Ban Kōkei and Mikuma Katen, *Kinsei kijinden*; Zoku *kinsei kijinden*, Munemasa Isoo, ed. (Heibonsha, 1972), pp. 190-192.

For now, for now, I will turn to the  
 Large oak tree—a grove in  
 summer  
 How harsh it sounds! [The hail] on my  
 travelling hat  
 Praise Amida, praise Amida

This verse combines the *nenbutsu* with two of Bashō's *haikai*, and although it carries a certain logic—both the large oak and the traveling hat provide shelter from the elements, the same protection asked of Amida—it was heretical to standard *nenbutsu* recitation.<sup>31</sup> It similarly sullied the integrity of Bashō's originals. As a poet, then, Izen departed radically from the studied subtlety characterizing the poetic principles—e.g. *karumi* (lightness) or *sabi* (objective loneliness)—advanced by Bashō. As a public personality, his reckless demeanor transposed Bashō's aesthetics of eccentricity from art to behavior, perhaps diverting attention from insecurities over inadequate poetic prowess.

The Shōmon eccentric Teramachi Hyakuan (1695-1781), a final example, was a bakufu official demoted for coveting his *renga* teacher's position. Hyakuan (one hundred hermitages—so named for his desire to move one hundred times before dying) was a self-indulgent youth. Spending much of his time in the pleasure quarters, he earned a reputation around Edo as both a playboy and a poet. Until his marriage at age thirty-three, Hyakuan continued what he describes in *Gō no aki* (Autumn hair, 1735) as an astonishingly irresponsible lifestyle—carousing through the nights and napping through the days. If we are to take him at his word, his early life appears identical to how *Kachō kakurenbō* describes Hokka's. Hyakuan's associates also document his unpredictability and “scandalous behav-

<sup>31</sup> Bashō's two verses are: *mazu tanomu / shii no ki mo ari / natsu kodachi* (For now, I will turn to the large oak tree—a grove in summer) (translation by Haruo Shirane, “Matsuo Bashō and The Poetics of Scent” *HJAS* 52:1 (June 1992): 106); and *ikameshiki / oto ya arare no / hinokigasa* (How harsh it sounds! the spattering of the hail on my travelling hat) (translation by Makoto Ueda, *Matsuo Basho* (Kodansha International, 1982), p. 55).

ior” (*hōitsu muzan naru furumai*). *Tsuno moji* (Horn letters, 1739) notes that at a public Setsubun festival, during which one purifies and invites good luck into an establishment by throwing beans, instead of beans Hyakuan filled his square box with coins and proceeded to fling them about.<sup>32</sup> While this seems far from “scandalous,” Hyakuan’s inclusion in *Zoku haika kijin-dan* (More accounts of eccentric *haikai* poets, 1833) and *Kijin hyakunin isshu* (One hundred verses from one hundred eccentrics, 1852) bespeak his reputation as an oddball.

Later in life Hyakuan counted himself among a contingent intent on advancing Edo *haikai*. Not content merely to condemn the vulgarity and superficiality of contemporary Shōmon verse, Hyakuan actively sought a fresh vision for what Nakano calls “mature” Edo *haikai*. As an Edo poet, Hyakuan felt a kinship with Bashō, and while retaining his conviction that humor and play should remain the roots of *haikai*, in important ways the literary freedom he sought returned him to the spirit of independence so central to Bashō’s poetics.<sup>33</sup> Neither his treatises nor his own poetry proved widely inspirational, however, and he is memorialized in works like *Kijin hyakunin isshu* more for his singular personality than his literary talents.<sup>34</sup>

Thus represented by the likes of Hokka, Izen, and Hyakuan, the Shōmon school became inconsistent and diffuse, a decline that for Ueda Akinari (1734-1809) suggested the corruption of Bashō himself. From about the time that Harumachi produced *Kachō*, Akinari wrote critically of Bashō. In *Tandai shōshin roku* (Courage and caution, 1808) he calls Bashō a fraud,<sup>35</sup> and in *Kyonen no edaori* (Last year’s broken boughs, 1779) he rails that Bashō “lived in no determined place and, like Saigyō [1118-1190] and Sōgi [1421-1502] of long ago, traipsed throughout the land with his sedge hat and bamboo staff without

understanding anything... Neither a priest nor a layman, he wandered about as if crazed [*kurui*], expounding on all sorts of things without learning a thing.”<sup>36</sup>

Despite detractors like Akinari and ineffectual heirs like Hokka, Izen, and Hyakuan, Bashō’s reputation suffered little. For while his successors converted *kyō* and *muyō* into aesthetic signifiers connoting bawdiness and superficiality, Bashō’s own accomplishments continued to garner admiration. Contemporaries, perhaps in response to the sort of ridicule fostered by *Kachō*, endeavored to resurrect the quality and status of Shōmon poetry. Yosa Buson (1716-1783) stood at the leading edge of this *haikai* revival. The same year that Harumachi published *Kachō*, Buson and his followers erected a hall, the Bashōan (Bashō hut), in which to congregate, compose *haikai*, and write commentaries on Bashō.<sup>37</sup> For Harumachi, however, such idolatry constituted pomposity. Hokka, Bashō’s antithesis, was more interesting.

Superficially, *Kachō kakurenbō* can be read as a biographical tribute to Hokka. Consistent with much Edo period biography, it relies on several short anecdotes to memorialize its subject. Most episodes showcase Hokka’s strangeness, though Hokka crystallizes as more egocentric than eccentric. Others highlight his interactions with Edo’s cultural celebrities. Though Harumachi falsely claims Hokka to be a contemporary of Bashō, other details regarding the chronology of Hokka’s posts, his pseudonyms, and the nature of his post-retirement lifestyle are generally accurate.

Despite its biographical disguise, the work is better read as a tribute to Edo’s cultural vitality and as a parody of the Shōmon school. Hokka, together with *Kachō*’s cast of minor characters, accomplishes both objectives. Harumachi begins with Hokka, who as a child chides his teachers and then betters his elders at swordsmanship; as an adult he outwits a group of bandits and cavorts with Edo’s most imminent cultural celebri-

<sup>32</sup> Nakano Tsutoshi, *Edo Kyōshaden* (Chūō kōron Shinsha, 2007), p. 56.

<sup>33</sup> Nakano 2007, p. 67.

<sup>34</sup> *Gazoku no kai* 2005, pp. 56-7.

<sup>35</sup> Ueda Akinari, *Taidai shōshinroku*, transl. William E. Clarke and Wendy E. Cobcroft (Sydney: Premodern Japanese Studies, 2009), p. 69.

<sup>36</sup> Nakanishi Susumu, *Kyō no seishinshi* (Kōdansha, 1978), p. 156.

<sup>37</sup> For a full treatment of Buson and his excavation of Bashō, see Crowley 2006.

ties. But he is also a degenerate showoff whose sloth and disreputable comportment humorously conflict with his presumed cultural sophistication. Harumachi then directs his focus to Edo *haikai*, signaling his intention to place the Shōmon school on center stage alongside Hokka. In a two-page snapshot of backroom interactions between prominent kabuki actors and Shōmon poets, he reveals how *haikai* intersected with kabuki within Edo's leisure culture. Here Harumachi is playing to the obsessions of his readers, for whom glimpses of the offstage lives of stars like kabuki actor Ichikawa Danjūrō (1660-1704) and his *on-nagata* stage partner Ogino Sawanojō (1656-1704) would add a titillating dimension to his tale of a comical but otherwise obscure figure. *Kachō* then proceeds to connect Hokka with a cavalcade of Shōmon royalty who likewise become sources of amusement. Takarai Kikaku (1661-1707) and Hattori Ransetsu (1654-1707)—two of the *Shōmon no jittetsu*—are mentioned, Kikaku cavorting with Hokka in the Yoshiwara and Yanagibashi pleasure quarters. Ichikawa Danjūrō is similarly depicted, and collectively they form a laughable trio of boors content to revel in base pleasures, perhaps to compensate for their lack of poetic talent. Hokka also encounters kabuki actors Nakamura Denkurō (1662-1713) and Nakamura Shichizaburō (1662-1708), as well as the two noted female Shōmon masters Shūshiki (1668?-1725) and Shiba Sonome (1664-1726).<sup>38</sup> Thus surrounded by Edo's cultural elite, Hokka becomes an elite himself, but his interactions with these individuals occur within the context of decadent behavior.<sup>39</sup> And while the text includes a number of *haikai*, all but one are composed by his drinking companions. Hokka's own poetic voice is nearly unheard, adding an additional layer of suspicion regarding his literary talents.

All of Harumachi's minor characters are

<sup>38</sup> Shūshiki studied under Kikaku. *Kachō kakurenbō* includes one of her *haikai*. Sonome, a celebrated female *haikai* poet of the Genroku period, studied with Bashō and Kikaku.

<sup>39</sup> Hokka's alleged association with such figures is anachronistic, of course, for he was but an infant when most of them were active. This error is consistent with Harumachi's mistaken belief that Hokka was Bashō's contemporary.

known devotees of Shōmon school *haikai*, and many of the verses attributed to them in *Kachō* are cited correctly. And given that Ichikawa Danjūrō and other actors around him did study Shōmon *haikai* it is likely that they associated with local masters like Kikaku and Ransetsu. Yet elsewhere Harumachi takes liberties, and *Kachō*'s conversations and episodes must be considered apocryphal. Harumachi wrote *kyōka* (under the name Sakanoue Furachi) but was not known for composing *haikai*, and he likely had no close ties to or intimate knowledge of Shōmon affiliates. Neither can we assume that Shūshiki and Sonome interacted freely with this cohort. Harumachi's embellishments and name-dropping serve merely to boost marketability and generate humor.

*Kachō*'s delivery of this humor is unpolished, however, for as a *kibyōshi* the text consists primarily of captions coupled to illustrations. This format yields an abbreviated and occasionally disjointed narrative. Description is sparse. The illustrations tend to be crowded, but in each case Hokka (Jidaraku sensei) is conspicuous by the character for self (自: *ji*; *mizukara*) displayed prominently like a crest on his robe. This is not merely the first character in Jidaraku, but visual testimony to the egotism elaborated in the text. By literally wearing his selfishness on his sleeve Hokka offers a visible marker of eccentricity that celebrates self over all else. Recognizable also by his distinctive physical attributes—his balled hair and long beard—in each illustration he becomes the point of interest. Even as they depict his selfishness and alienation, the illustrations clearly portray him as a local hero. It is evident, therefore, that Harumachi's is not a critical satire of Hokka. By parodying him, Harumachi pays tribute to the very sort of absurd public image that Hokka sought to create for himself. The mockery is not a condemnation but rather an appreciative excavation of the buffoonery advanced by Hokka's own antics and writings, which by the 1770s were surely fading from public memory.

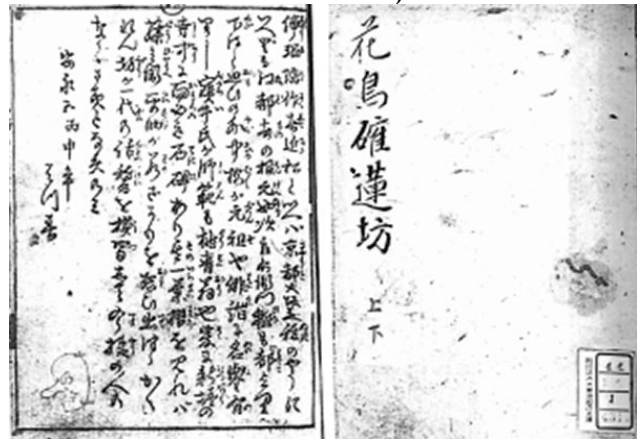
Harumachi thus appeals to his local readership in two ways. The first is comic satire of Hokka and his constellation of Shōmon companions. Snooty, elitist, and serving no socially useful purpose, Harumachi implies, their hedonism belies any actual sophistication. Spoiled and undisciplined as children, as adults they lol-



lygag about the city frequenting the pleasure quarters and cavorting with kabuki actors. When they take to wandering the countryside, their dandyish, cosmopolitan appearance makes them laughable and easy prey for bandits. For Harumachi, contemporary Shōmon affiliates embodied attitudes that degraded Bashō's poetics of eccentricity to buffoonery and selfishness. The work's second layer of public appeal is its proximity to and affection for contemporary Edo culture. Its Edo-centrism is clear both from Harumachi's preface, which repeatedly and explicitly extols the city as an important hub of national culture, and from his reminders that Bashō and the Shōmon school are rightful monuments of Edo. Indeed, the text derives much of its appeal in inviting a local readership to enjoy the irony of both celebrating and lampooning local celebrities. Such an agenda was enabled only by a readership that recognized and embraced buffoonery as a standing cultural theme. Had the flamboyant lifestyles of individuals like Hokka not been popularly valued, Harumachi could not have produced such works. Through *Kachō*, Harumachi's readers laugh *with* rather than *at* Hokka, for they understand that, as consumers of the buffoonery at issue, they incur some of the mockery themselves.

This translation is based on the unannotated reprint in *Gazoku no kai* (ed.), with Nakano Mitsutoshi, *Gazoku bunsō: Nakano Mitsutoshi sensei koki kinen shiryōshū* (Kyūko shoin, 2005), pp. 162-173, which notes that the only known copy of the original publication is held by Daitōkyū kinen bunko (Daitokyu Memorial Library) in Tokyo.

*Kachō kakurenbō* (Hide and Seek among Flowers and Birds)



Preface

Though the *jōruri* writer Chikamatsu [Monzaemon] is often believed to hail from Kyoto or Osaka, originally he was a child of Edo. Similarly, while it is thought that Jiroemon-bina dolls came from the capital, they were also originally from Nakabashi [in Edo]. Takarai Kikaku, moreover, now so celebrated for his *haikai*, studied under Old Man Tōsei [here in Edo].<sup>40</sup>

An interesting gravestone stands at a temple in Nippori, [Edo]. Seeing sketches of it reminds one of Tō Byōhe and Heisuke as flamboyant youths.<sup>41</sup> Here I relate the remarkable life of Kakurenbō [memorialized by this stone], offering it as a source of amusement for contemporary readers.<sup>42</sup>

New Year, An'ei 5 [1776]

<sup>40</sup> Referring to Jirozaemon-bina dolls, Harumachi mistakenly writes Jiroemon-bina. Harumachi's claim of their Edo origin is false. The dolls were developed in Kyoto in the early eighteenth century by the celebrated doll maker Jirozaemon and later popularized in Edo. Takarai Kikaku was one of Bashō's central disciples and also hailed from Edo. Tōsei was one of Matsuo Bashō's earlier pennames.

<sup>41</sup> Byōhe is one of Hattori Ransetsu's names. See note 45. Heisuke is a nickname for Takarai Kikaku.

<sup>42</sup> Kakurenbō, one of Yamazaki Hokka's sobriquets, is an *ateji* meaning one who hides away like a hermit.



Master Depravity was from Musashi in Edo and born the son of a virtuous samurai at the start of the Genroku period [1688-1704].<sup>43</sup> As a child he was called Yosaburō. His was a selfish disposition and from his youth he fussed over doing his studies. He was rather self-centered and argumentative, so his parents eventually had him study with a teacher.

This teacher once asked Yosaburō to pour him some wine, but the child made no effort to comply. Asked why he refused to pour, Yosaburō replied that he feared treading upon the teacher's shadow cast upon the floor between them, and that the teacher should request another child to do it. In the evening the teacher asked Yosaburō to fetch a wooden pillow, but as he cautiously reached out for it he saw that, instead of a pillow, a cup of water had been perilously set atop his folding screen. What a strangely clever ploy!

<sup>43</sup> Master Depravity: The name given here is Jidaraku sensei. Harumachi uses the term *bukō* (Musashi), seemingly invoking Bashō's use of the term in *Oku no hosomichi*. This origin is inaccurate, for Hokka was born in 1700. Either Harumachi used unreliable sources to date Hokka, or he intentionally alters Hokka's birth date to make him contemporaneous with Bashō, thereby enabling him to claim (below) that Hokka studied with Bashō.



News of Yosaburō's mischief reached the local lord, who decided that the boy should be learning swordsmanship. At the dōjō, Yosaburō squared off against his opponents, aggressively showering them with blows, and not a single challenger could beat him. As he won bout after bout, he suddenly claimed a chronic ailment and begged to be excused. Thereafter he enjoyed the life of a rōnin.<sup>44</sup>

When Yosaburō reached adulthood he was called Miyazaki Kinzaemon. At age sixteen he began working and by age thirty-eight had served five different lords. Despising serving others, he always ranted around, trying to show that there were none more worthy than he.

Once he dropped in on his childhood friends, where he proceeded to fill a bowl with water, place it atop a sheet of paper, and then yank out the paper without upsetting the water. He challenged them to replicate this feat, but all proved unworthy.

<sup>44</sup> As Yosaburō had not yet come of age he is not literally a rōnin. Harumachi's use of the term suggests that Yosaburō's parents hereafter left the boy to his own devices.



From the Tenna [1681-84] and Jōkyō [1684-88] eras, *haikai* had become extremely popular in Edo. Oaki, the daughter of Sahyōe from Koami village, was eleven at that time and enjoyed composing *haikai*. [Takarai] Kikaku and [Hattori] Ransetsu, two disciples of the imminent poet Old Man Bashō, were celebrated and admired poets at this time. Kikaku's *hokku* (opening verse) on the ten oxen was especially admired.<sup>45</sup>

Once Oaki saw the beautiful Daihannya cherry tree by the well at Kiyomizu Kannon at Tōeizan temple, whereupon she composed this *hokku*.<sup>46</sup>

*i no moto no  
sakura abunashi  
sake no yoi*

so close to the well  
a cherry tree in danger  
intoxicated by wine

When this verse reached the lord's ears he sent her a token of his appreciation. This was the girl who would later become the famous *hai-*

<sup>45</sup> Like Kikaku (see note 41), Hattori Ransetsu was one of Bashō's central disciples. He emulated Bashō by producing records of his travels around the country. "Ten oxen" refers to the Ten Ox-Herding Pictures from the Northern Song period representing the ten stages of Zen enlightenment.

<sup>46</sup> The Daihannya cherry takes its name from the Great Wisdom Sutra (*Daihannya-kyō*).

*kai* poet Shūshiki.<sup>47</sup>



[Hagino Sawanojō] Kikaku was the [*haikai*] instructor of Ichikawa Hakuen.<sup>48</sup> Once, during the hottest season, Nakamura Denkurō entered his dressing room and intoned:<sup>49</sup>

*Asahina no  
gakuya e irishi  
atsusa kana*

like entering  
Asahina's dressing room  
what heat!<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Shūshiki studied under Kikaku and became one of the celebrated female *haikai* poets of this period. She composed this verse at age thirteen, and thereafter the tree was named Shūshiki-zakura.

<sup>48</sup> Names in brackets identify the figures (from right to left) in the illustration. Here Harumachi mistakenly writes Hagino, though clearly referring to the *onnagata* kabuki actor Ogino Sawanojō who moved to Edo in 1692 and earned fame performing alongside Ichikawa Danjūrō. Hakuen was the *haikai* name of Ichikawa Danjūrō.

<sup>49</sup> Nakamura Denkurō is another kabuki actor.

<sup>50</sup> Here Nakamura refers to the warrior Asahina Yoshihide (b. 1176) who, in the *kyōgen* play *Asahina*, is lured into hell by the demon king Enma. The poem compares the dressing room to the fires of hell.

Shichizaburō composed the following as a farewell gift upon departing for the capital.<sup>51</sup>

*yamadori mo  
hito wo urayamu  
tabine kana*

the mountain bird  
envious of people  
sleeping far from home

When Ichikawa Kyūzō took the stage name Danjūrō, he rejoiced:

*mitsumasu ya  
mono zo kohoranu  
mizu no suji*<sup>52</sup>

three theater box seats  
all are unfrozen  
this river of viewers

[Nakagawa Hanzaburō<sup>53</sup>]

[Hisamatsu Tazata] There is nothing as entertaining as *haikai*. Kikaku met and instructed kabuki actors each and every day, [and his conversations went something like this:]

“What does it mean to become wiser?”  
“It is to loudly boast about oneself.”  
“What does it mean to fall flat?”  
“It is to be very surprised.”  
“What is it to have died?”  
“It is something so funny it makes one faint.”  
“What is it to gaze at the ceiling?”  
“It means to fail.”

Hattori Ransetsu’s true name was Fuji Byōhe. The given name of Sakaya (Takarai) Kikaku, a

<sup>51</sup> Nakamura Shichisaburō was also a kabuki actor and affiliated with Danjūrō and Denkurō.

<sup>52</sup> Mitsumasu, in addition to meaning three theater box seats, also refers to Ichikawa Danjūrō’s crest, which consists of three concentric squares.

<sup>53</sup> Nakagawa Hanzaburō (active late Genroku period) is also a kabuki actor.

dye wholesaler, was Heisuke.<sup>54</sup>

[Nakajima Kanzaemon<sup>55</sup>]



Once Yosaburō became a *haikai* poet, people came to recognize his name and face wherever he went. It was his habit to doze past noon, rousing himself only when his friends brought in saké and fish. Those around him subsequently dubbed him Master Depravity. (One of them composed:)

*sawara no ankake de  
nomikake yama oki tamae tamae*

there with your mackerel and sauce  
half-drunken mountain, please  
please wake up

Master Depravity was a completely selfish person, but once he became a *haikai* master he

<sup>54</sup> Having more fun with names, Harumachi uses the words *Fuji* and *sakaya* here to invoke a well-known poem attributed to Kikaku:

*Fuji no yuki  
hae wa sakaya ni  
nokorikeri*

snow on Fuji  
while in the tavern  
flies remain

<sup>55</sup> Nakajima Kanzaemon (1662-1716) was a kabuki actor who moved to Edo in 1686 and performed with the others.

was loaded with money. He became the disciple of Old Man Bashō, from which time his name became Sanjunmei, and he changed his sobriquet to Kan and then took the moniker Furyōken.<sup>56</sup> He named his hut Fushian and his penname was Sharakusai.<sup>57</sup> His priestly name was Kakurenbō but he called himself Master Depravity.



The Master was drawn to elegant things. He grew his beard long and scented his clothing with incense, and this fragrance followed him as he wandered through various provinces practicing austerities. He was just like the Chinese scholars Cheng Hao and Guan Yu.<sup>58</sup> Penetrating the provinces to the north (*michinoku*), he once pushed as far as Matsushima. As for his appearance, his hair was bound up in a ball on his head, his beard was long, and he carried tooth dye to blacken his teeth.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>56</sup> See note 43.

<sup>57</sup> Harumachi again uses names to deliver humor. Furyōken, Fushian, and Sharakusai are all homophones for “bad idea,” “thoughtless,” and “impudent” respectively.

<sup>58</sup> Cheng Hao (1032-1085) was a Neo-Confucian scholar noted for his moral virtue and piety. Guan Yu (d. 219) was a general famous for his long beard. Drawing comparisons with such eminent historical figures would be considered absurd and therefore humorous.

<sup>59</sup> In the Edo period scenting one’s clothing with incense, wearing one’s hair in a ball (*kawara*), and blackening one’s teeth were

Once, as evening approached, bandits suddenly appeared from all sides. After stripping him naked, they then demanded that he hand over his beard, as well. “What are you going to do with my beard?” has asked. “Make a broom,” they replied.

*waga tame no  
hōki no hige wa  
yurusekashi  
kari no ukiyo wo  
sude hatsuru made*

making a broom  
of my beard  
I will allow  
if it helps me sweep away  
this weary world

The bandits were so enchanted by this verse that they returned his clothing.



The Master got it into his head to go to the Yoshiwara, but once there he could think of nothing but writing *haikai*. He visited the Kari-ganeya tea house, where he saw Takarai Kikaku, no doubt thinking of the ten oxen poem. At that moment, just before sunrise, Kikaku put the cuckoo’s cry into verse. The Master overheard him recite:

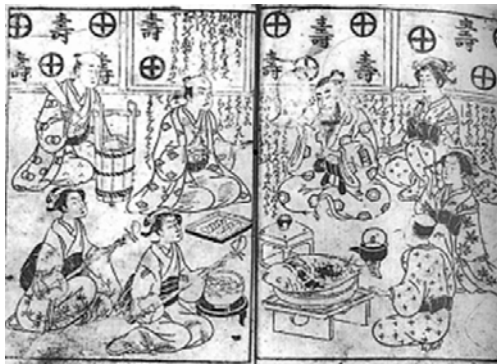
*hototogisu  
akatsuki kasa wo*

women’s practices that for a man would be prominent markers of eccentricity.

*kawasekeri*

the cuckoo's call  
at daybreak I am made to buy  
a reddish umbrella<sup>60</sup>

From the second floor he called "Master Takarai, Master Takarai!" They ordered saké from one of the maids and sat down to drink. Presently they left together and boarded a boat, arriving at Yanagibashi just as the morning gongs were ringing.



The famous female *haikai* master of long ago whose name was Sonome became extremely popular.<sup>61</sup> At a fish shop in Shinba Honzaimokuchō ...[illegible]...

A man Kurō Byōhei became intimate with Ukon from the Shinchō Daikokuya teahouse and when her contract expired on the eighth day of the fourth month he moved her to his place.<sup>62</sup> They called Hakuen and celebrated their wedding. Hakuen composed the opening verse:<sup>63</sup>

*yo ga tsuu ya*  
*koto ni yakushi no*

<sup>60</sup> The *kanji* used for the name of the cuckoo also means "I'd better to return." Therefore the verse suggests that it is just before daybreak and Kikaku is thinking of returning home. As rain begins to fall, forcing Kikaku to buy an umbrella, a cuckoo cries.

<sup>61</sup> Shiba Sonome was a prominent female Shōmon poet. She studied with Matsuo Bashō and Takarai Kikaku.

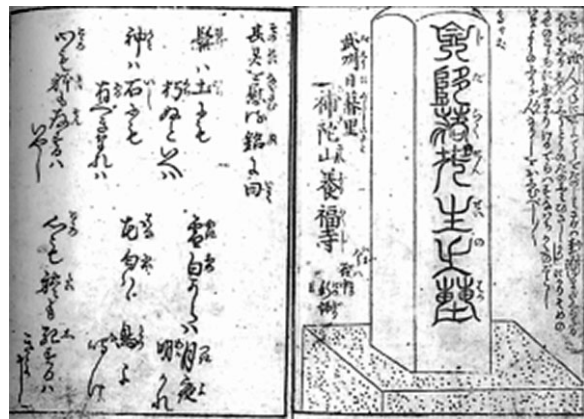
<sup>62</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>63</sup> Ichikawa Danjūrō.

*hikiawase*

getting fish and  
getting married are really  
all Yakushi's doing<sup>64</sup>

Happily, at this time Depravity was also invited and partook of the festivities throughout the night.



This elegant man Depravity always enjoyed eating fish and fowl, and he knew the taste of saké better than Li Bai and Tao Qian.<sup>65</sup> With no shortage of pleasures during each of the four seasons, he seemed destined to enjoy longevity. But then he was suddenly beset with a slight cold and passed away. The temple commemorates this contemporary poet as follows.

The tombstone of Master Depravity: height: one *jō* (1.7 meters)

Bushū Higurashi no Sato [in Nippori]; Fuda San-yōfukuji temple, currently called Yanaka Nippori

The inscription consoles his spirit, declaring:

<sup>64</sup> Yakushi Nyōrai is the Buddha of medicine and healing. It is thanks to him, Hakuen claims, that he is able to eat fresh bonito and that Byōhei and Ukon are able to marry.

<sup>65</sup> Li Bai (701-762) and Tao Qian (365-427) are famous Chinese poets. Comparing historical figures of their importance with the protagonist is comically absurd.

His long beard is now decomposed beneath  
the ground  
But, as gods dwell even within this stone,  
The existence of body and heart is a vulgar  
thing  
Let moonlight shine off the snow-covered  
landscape  
Let birds sing when the flowers bloom, for  
The death of body and heart is the true  
purity



Master Depravity was fond of saying that if one's body is alive but his heart is dead the death is eternal; if one's heart is alive but his body is dead the death is temporary. To sleep amidst the moonlight and flowers is the most elegant of all elegances. To extinguish one's heart in tranquility is to become a hermit above all hermits. At age forty this month of this year he lays in deep sleep, and this tombstone is erected to console his spirit.

Illustrations by Torii Kiyotsune (fl. 1757-79)<sup>66</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Torii Kiyotsune was a *kokkeibon* illustrator from a family of noted ukiyoe artists active in Edo throughout the eighteenth century.